CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1. A method for enabling an implementation of a discount
processing technique for a virtual store, said method
comprising:

providing a discount schedule for a number of different
10 suppliers of items offered for sale at said virtual store;

presenting display screens describing said items to
customers, said display screen including descriptions of
discounts which are available for different groups of said
15 items in accordance with said discount schedule;

enabling a selection of items by said customers; and

presenting a purchase summary to said customers, said
20 purchase summary including prices for selected items
together with appropriate discounts as determined in
accordance with said discount schedule.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said discount
25 schedule is comprised of a database containing individual
discount schemes for a number of different suppliers.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said discount
schedule is referenced to volume purchase levels.
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4. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said discount
schedule is referenced to groupings of items selected.

5. The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including:

enabling a confirmation of said purchase summary by said customer whereby said customer is able to confirm the purchase of the selected items by the customer.

6. The method as set forth in claim 5 and further including:

saving sales information records relating to purchases of selected items during a predetermined period;

extracting predetermined supplier related information from said sales information records; and

notifying each of said suppliers with appropriate portions of said extracted supplier related information.

7. The method as set for in claim 6 wherein said notifying is accomplished at periodic intervals.

8. A storage medium including machine readable coded indicia, said storage medium being selectively coupled to a reading device, said reading device being selectively coupled to processing circuitry within a computer system, said reading device being selectively operable to read said machine readable coded indicia and provide program signals representative thereof, said program signals being effective to enable an implementation of a discount processing technique for a virtual store, said program signals being selectively operable for:

providing a discount schedule for a number of different
suppliers of items offered for sale at said virtual store;

presenting display screens describing said items to
5   customers, said display screen including descriptions of
discounts which are available for different groups of said
items in accordance with said discount schedule;

enabling a selection of items by said customers; and
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presenting a purchase summary to said customers, said
purchase summary including prices for selected items
together with appropriate discounts as determined in
accordance with said discount schedule.
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9. The medium as set forth in claim 8 wherein said discount
schedule is comprised of a database containing individual
discount schemes for a number of different suppliers.

20   10. The medium as set forth in claim 9 wherein said discount
schedule is referenced to volume purchase levels.

11. The medium as set forth in claim 9 wherein said discount
schedule is referenced to groupings of items selected.
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12. The medium as set forth in claim 8 wherein said program
signals are further effective for:

enabling a confirmation of said purchase summary by said
30   customer whereby said customer is able to confirm the
purchase of the selected items by the customer.

13. The medium as set forth in claim 12 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

saving sales information records relating to purchases of

5   selected items during a predetermined period;

extracting predetermined supplier related information from said sales information records; and

10   notifying each of said suppliers with appropriate portions of said extracted supplier related information.

14. The medium as set for in claim 13 wherein said notifying is accomplished at periodic intervals.

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15. A virtual store computer system for use in operating a virtual store in which items are offered for sale, said virtual store computer system comprising:

20   a system bus;

a CPU device connected to said system bus;

a memory device connected to said system bus; and

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means for receiving input from a customer system with reference to screens caused by said virtual store computer system to be displayed on a display screen within said customer system, said memory device including a discount

30   schedule for a number of different suppliers of items offered for sale at said virtual store, said virtual store computer system being selectively operable for:

presenting display screens to said customers describing said items to customers, said display screens including descriptions of discounts which are available for different groups of said items in accordance with said discount

5   schedule,

enabling a selection of items by said customers; and

presenting a purchase summary to said customers, said

10   purchase summary including prices for selected items together with appropriate discounts as determined in accordance with said discount schedule.

16. The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim

15   15 wherein said discount schedule is comprised of a database containing individual discount schemes for a number of different suppliers.

17. The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim

20   16 wherein said discount schedule is referenced to volume purchase levels.

18. The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 16 wherein said discount schedule is referenced to groupings

25   of items selected.

19. The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 15 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

30   enabling a confirmation of said purchase summary by said customer whereby said customer is able to confirm the purchase of the selected items by the customer.

20. The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 19 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

5 saving sales information records relating to purchases of selected items during a predetermined period;

extracting predetermined supplier related information from said sales information records; and

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notifying each of said suppliers with appropriate portions of said extracted supplier related information.

21. The virtual store computer system as set for in claim 20

15 wherein said notifying is accomplished at periodic intervals.

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